



Alan I. Leshner
Chief Executive Officer and
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February 24, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-2803

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
361A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1702

Dear Senators Reid and McConnell:

On behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the world's largest general scientific society, representing the interests of ten million scientists worldwide, I am writing to urge you to sustain funding for federal research and development (R&D) as you work to complete appropriations for FY 2011. AAAS recognizes the seriousness that our nation's deficit poses to our economic strength. We are concerned, however, that the proposed budgetary reductions that are contained in the final legislative proposal for the FY 2011 Continuing Resolution (H.R. 1) that recently passed the House chamber would severely damage America's scientific enterprise and its productivity, and thus would have serious consequences for the nation's future competitiveness.

A recent Pew survey showed that 36% of American citizens support increasing funding for scientific research, while only 23% support decreasing federal support. Historically, and despite the severe constraints imposed by deficit reduction efforts in previous years, federal funding for basic research has traditionally enjoyed strong bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress, and we hope this trend will be maintained.

Some specific areas of concern include:

- Severe cuts to the Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy and the Office of Science programs are particularly devastating. These programs play a critical role in fostering a clean energy economy and protecting our nation's future energy security.
- Cuts of almost five percent below FY 2010 levels to the National Institutes of Health will slow down critical medical research and innovation into new therapies and tools to address emerging public health needs.
- Defunding of NOAA's proposed Climate Service will inhibit our nation's ability to leverage and coordinate efforts to provide local, regional, and national policymakers with

easily accessible and real-time scientific data on impacts to climate and environment that they need to make informed decisions.

- Cuts to funding that allow scientists to travel and participate in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will inhibit U.S. scientists to contribute their expertise to the these reports, which represent a synthesis and analysis of all the published studies on climate change.

History has shown that a strong science and technology enterprise has been responsible for much of the United States' economic growth since World War II. This fact underscores the AAAS belief that, in order to promote economic growth and keep the United States at the forefront of technological development, it is necessary to maintain funding for fundamental and multidisciplinary research across multiple agencies. We urge you to continue to nurture a prosperous future by supporting federal investments in defense and non-defense R&D.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alan Leshner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alan I. Leshner